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Wal-Mart acknowledges investigation over hazardous waste

BENTONVILLE, Ark. (AP) -- Wal-Mart Stores Inc. is the target of a criminal investigation over how it handled merchandise that is classified as hazardous waste, the company announced Tuesday.

Wal-Mart said in a regulatory filing that the investigation centers on the company's transport of hazardous materials from stores in California to a return center in Las Vegas. The company said its practice is to move hazardous materials to return centers, then take the materials to sites approved for hazardous waste disposal.

Federal prosecutors say, according to Wal-Mart, that the company potentially violated the Resource Conservation and Recovery Act, which requires hazardous waste to be shipped straight to a disposal site via a certified hazardous waste carrier.

"The company cannot predict the outcome of this matter or the amount of any possible loss or range of loss which may arise from this matter," Wal-Mart said in a Tuesday filing.

Wal-Mart in October acknowledged the a grand jury in Los Angeles had subpoenaed the company over its handling of hazardous materials and hazardous waste.

Also Tuesday, Wal-Mart said state regulators and local authorities in California and Nevada are investigating. Wal-Mart said it is cooperating with authorities.

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